

N.O.W. News

Official publication of the Numismatists Of Wisconsin



Numismatists of Wisconsin is incorporated in the state of Wisconsin as a non-stock nonprofit tax exempt corporation. Contributions are tax deductible. The objective of Numismatists of Wisconsin is to encourage and promote interest in numismatics, to cultivate friendly relations between Wisconsin collectors of numismatic items and Wisconsin coin clubs, and to encourage, educate, and assist new numismatic hobbyists. All resources of the organization shall be used to further these objectives. Dues are \$10 per year and entitles participants to N.O.W. News, this quarterly publication

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ON THE COVER: What is a stained glass window doing on the cover of NOW NEWS? Good question! It has great significance for a number of reasons. **First**, it is a beautiful rendition of the City of Milwaukee Official Seal. **Second**, the Milwaukee Seal is the subject of one of our feature articles in this issue. **Third**, our 55th Annual NOW Convention is being held in Milwaukee at the end of March, hosted by the South Shore Coin Club and their 52nd Annual Show. **Fourth**, the Milwaukee Seal will be highlighted on the commemorative wooden nickel (see page 10) being distributed at the three-day NOW/SSCC show. **Fifth**, considering our annual NOW show is in Milwaukee this year, there is a Milwaukee theme throughout this issue including three feature articles with Milwaukee concerns. **Sixth**, your NOW NEWS editor thought it would make a cool cover.

From the Editor

Greetings fellow NOW members! Spring has sprung! Well, your spring issue of NOW NEWS has sprung anyway, and soon winter will melt away and it will actually be spring! It is a time of change. The weather outside changes, the snow blower is replaced by the lawn mower, coats are replaced by shirts, and some wives insist their husbands remodel every room in the house. This is the way of spring, and so it is with your NOW NEWS. The changes are subtle, it is not a major remodel project. Just a few tweaks to keep it fresh. If you notice the changes, that's great, I hope you approve. If you can't notice any change, that's just as good, it means you are so engrossed in the stimulating content of the magazine before you that noticing subtleties in design are of little consequence. That's just one small sign of a quality publication.

More importantly, the health of a good club journal is in the quality of articles within its pages, put forth by the participation of its members. In this issue we have seven, that's right, SEVEN - original articles, including member authors who are first time contributors, and one established researcher from outside our ranks. This makes for another diverse and interesting spring issue. Last issue I called-out to the membership to send in articles – and just like that we have new authors contributing! Consider that call-out an ongoing request, and thank you!

In this issue you will learn about the City of Milwaukee Seal from first time NOW NEWS author Darrell Luedtke. Our cover shows the Seal in stained glass. The Seal will also be featured on the wooden nickel of the NOW/SSCC show. Justin Perrault, another first time NOW NEWS author, tells us about the S.C. Johnson Company and their award medals. Repeat contributor Mark Benvenuto travels abroad with the first of a series of World Coin exploration, this time it's Italy and the 5 Lire coin. Regular contributor Tom Casper researches Milwaukee's early coin dealers. It is a special treat to publish a piece written by numismatic researcher David Finkelstein who dispels some myths about our first mint director David Rittenhouse. Jerry Binsfeld continues his series of price comparisons, and I submit a 'numis-fiction' for those who would lament the future demise of coins.

All of our regular features are here as well, NOW NEWS and NOTES (Lots of Spring Shows!!!), Club news, ANA news, U.S. Mint news, BEP news, BOOKS!, and more!

Finally, I want to share some comments from a letter to the editor from United States Airforce Veteran Chris Cimino of Mosinee. *"I really enjoyed the Winter issue of NOW NEWS, very good as usual. Enclosed are my \$10 Dues for 2016, Still a Bargain!!! Thank you for all the fun and interesting articles!"*

Thank you Chris, for those nice comments! Chris goes on to write how he'd love to see an article about Civilian Conservation Corps tokens and scrip, as well as something on Tavern Tokens. Well, I know we have experts on those subjects among our membership – you know who you are – you know you can write an interesting article – so, get crackin' my friends, its SPRING!

-Jeff Reichenberger





NOW News and Notes

NOW BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Your Board of Governors met on February 21 in Oshkosh, in conjunction with Wisconsin Coin Expos 33rd annual show. Present were President Thad Streeter, VP Fred Borgmann, Secretary/Treasurer Bill Oldenburg, Governors Cliff Mishler, Ken Muelling, Bill Brandimore, and Jeff Reichenberger. Also in attendance were NOW member guest – and soon to be sworn in Governor - Bruce Benoit, and non-member Dan Vanden Avond.

Topics discussed included:

- Our treasurer is seeking to resign his position at such time that a replacement can be suitably transitioned in.
- The digitization of NOW NEWS archives is complete and currently available to anyone for research or pleasure at <https://archive.org/details/newmannumismatic> until such time that the Newman Numismatic Portal website is fully operational. Look for that announcement in subsequent issues of NOW NEWS.
- Preparation for the NOW/South Shore Coin Club show – March 31, April 1 & 2. NOW will be represented at the show with a booth, greeting guests, and recruiting members. Current members are encouraged to ‘hang out’ at the booth and help talk about our club to potential new members.
- Sadly, one of our distinguished NOW board members and past president announced his resignation. Bill Brandimore will be moving out of state, but will stay in touch as a NOW life member. We wish him all the best. Former NOW governor Bruce Benoit was duly sworn in as his replacement. Welcome back Bruce.
- The Writer’s Award Committee has gathered the ballots and will tabulate results to be announced in the next issue of NOW NEWS.
- The next meeting of the Board will be held at 11am on Saturday, April 2 at the NOW/SSCC show in Milwaukee, followed by the NOW General Membership Meeting at 1pm.

DUES POLICY

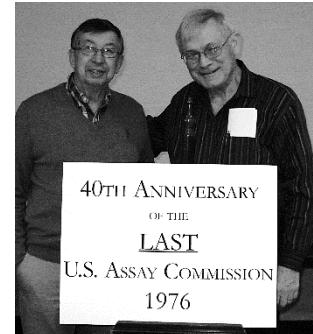
The board has adopted a DUES POLICY to help aid in keeping members up-to-date on their dues. Your Dues Notice comes to you via the NOW NEWS in the Winter issue (mid-December). Dues are expected to be paid in full by February 28 which is approximately two weeks prior to the release of the Spring issue (mid-March). The new policy states that if your dues are not paid by the release of the Spring issue, you will receive a ‘reminder’ postcard in the mail. Then if dues are not paid by May 31, which is approximately two weeks prior to the Summer issue (mid-June), you will be dropped from membership. Your NOW NEWS address label shows the year your dues are paid through. Please try to keep your dues up-to-date, it’s good for the club, and good for you! Thank you!

SHOW REPORT February 21 - Oshkosh

The Oshkosh show ‘kicks off’ the Wisconsin show season every year, and this year it kicked off with a bang! The bourse was very busy right from the bell (9am) until mid-afternoon. Many dealers commented on the nice turn out and were quite pleased with the results. Randy Miller, the show organizer, reported there were a lot of general interest items sold. People were happy to get out to the first show of the year and the weather cooperated nicely! Next year, mark your calendar for the third Sunday in February.

Assay Commissioners converge in Oshkosh

United States Assay Commissioner Larry Spanbauer set up an exhibit of memorabilia of his time on the commission at the Oshkosh Coin Show. Larry was assigned in 1976, the last year of the commission. On display were numerous documents explaining the Assay Commission, as well as scrapbooks, articles, photographs, and trinkets commemorating the occasion, and of course, his Assay Commission Medal.



Fellow Commissioner Cliff Mishler (1973) enjoyed Larry's exhibit and joined him for a photo-op.



The 1976 Assay Commission medal engraved by Frank Gasparro. The obverse depicts a portrait of Secretary of the Treasury William Simon, the reverse shows Washington crossing the Delaware commemorating our bicentennial. 76mm x 60mm



Larry Spanbauer shows his medal 1976.

Wisconsin is well represented among Assay Commission alumni: S.M. Hay, Oshkosh, 1893. Horace Rublee, Milwaukee, 1893. C.E. Mendenhall, Madison, 1907. Arthur Kopp, Madison, 1912 & 1915. H.O. Granberg, Oshkosh, 1916 & 1917. Theodore Hammer, Marinette, 1947. Chester Krause, Iola, 1961. Richard Yeoman, Racine, 1964. Edward Rochette, Iola, 1965. Kenneth Bressett, Racine, 1966. Virginia Culver, Thiensville, 1968. Marion Yeoman, Racine, 1968. Clifford Mishler, Iola, 1973. Russell Ralau, Iola, 1973. Robert Steele, Tomah, 1975. Lawrence Spanbauer, Oshkosh, 1976.

CLUB NEWS

(Lots of Spring Coin Show preparation! These clubs work hard to present these coin shows. Please make plans to attend as many as you can! –Editor)

Fox Valley Coin Club

At the latest club meeting most of the focus was on preparation for their annual spring coin show. This year to be held on March 20th at the usual location – The Darboy Club in Appleton. [See their ad in this issue](#) and also go to the Show Calendar for more info.

South Shore Coin Club

The SSCC is pulling together all of the components to present its annual three-day show. This year also teaming up with NOW. The SSCC/NOW show will be held March 31, April 1&2 at the Crowne Plaza Milwaukee Airport. [See the ad in this issue](#) and see more info on the Show Calendar

Madison Coin Club

The Madison Coin Club has recently sworn in a new Secretary and gave thanks to their outgoing Secretary. The club is planning a bus trip to Central States at the end of April. But currently preparing for their own spring show to be held on April 10 at the Sheraton Hotel. See details on the Show Calendar.

Sheboygan Coin Club

The Sheboygan CC is busy getting ready for their annual spring show at The Laker's Ice Center on April 17. See details on the Show Calendar.

Wisconsin Valley Coin Club

Da fellas way up nort dare is stayin warm getting things ready for their members auction, and their annual coin quiz. In addition, they have their hands full setting up their spring show, this year at a new location, The Plaza Hotel in Wausau, on April 17. [See their ad in this issue](#) and look for details on the Show Calendar.

Barron County Coin Club

The club enjoyed a Christmas party highlighted with live music from several of their members, followed by a great pot luck meal and bingo. In January they swore in a full host of new officers. Now it's prep time for their show on June 11 at Cedar Mall in Rice Lake. Details on the Show Calendar.

Milwaukee Numismatic Society

Public libraries in southeastern Wisconsin have benefited greatly from the efforts of the Milwaukee Numismatic Society in the past several years. Taking advantage of the financial support of the Central States Numismatic Society, substantial collections of key current numismatic reference works have been donated to local libraries.

The program began around 2008 with a donation to the Wauwatosa Public Library organized by MNS past President Pat Bethe. Leon Saryan, MNS president from 2010 to 2013, coordinated similar donations to the Greenfield Public Library in 2010, the Franklin Public Library in 2012, and the West Bend Community Library in 2014. These donations serve the goals of MNS by providing the public with easy access to authoritative information about coins and currency and their values.

For 2015, Saryan arranged for a similar donation to be made to the Oak Creek Public Library in suburban Milwaukee. Oak Creek Public Library just moved into a brand new facility as part of that city's redevelopment project.

The donation included a large selection of the world's leading numismatic standard reference catalogs issued by Krause Publications, as well as other noteworthy reference books. The total retail value of the 2015 donation exceeds \$800. Topics covered in the collection included United States coins and paper currency, counterfeits, coin grading, five huge world coin catalogs covering 1600 to the present, and three huge world paper money catalogs. "About half of the books that we donated were the Krause Publications standard world coin and world paper money catalogs," Saryan said. "KP has the most comprehensive reference works in the numismatic publication industry, and all donated books are the most recent editions." Also included were current editions of the Red Book and specialized catalogs on covering Civil War tokens, Confederate paper money, and United States bank notes.

Oak Creek Library Director Jill Lininger wrote a letter thanking MNS for its generosity. "Yours is a lasting gift in support of literacy and knowledge in our community," she said. "Donations like yours help people change their lives through reading."

"MNS is indebted to the Central States Numismatic Society for their generosity in underwriting this program," said Saryan. "This allows us to accomplish our educational objectives and is an easy project to accomplish. CSNS member clubs should take advantage of it."

"Clubs can appoint a library donation coordinator, who then approaches candidate libraries with a proposal. If the library is interested, a local dealer can arrange to procure books, which the coordinator then delivers to the library. "We worked with Racine dealer Bill Spencer," Saryan said, "and his cooperation makes the task simple."

Paperwork confirming the donation is submitted to Ray Lockwood, CSNS Education Director, which then reimburses participating clubs up to \$500 for the cost of the books. CSNS member clubs can take advantage of the program once a year.



Leon Saryan of MNS and Oak Creek Library Director Jill Lininger display the donated numismatic books.

A Little History of the City of Milwaukee and its Official Seal on its 170th Anniversary

by Darrell Luedtke #2309

The name "Milwaukee" comes from an Algonquian word Millioke, meaning "Good", "Beautiful" and "Pleasant Land".

As the 18th century came to a close, the first recorded white fur trader settled in Milwaukee. This was French Canadian Jean Baptiste Mirandeau who along with Jacques Vieau of La Baye (Green Bay), established a fur-trading post near the Menomonee River in 1795. Mirandeau remained all year with Vieau coming every spring with supplies. In 1820 or 1821 Mirandeau died and was the first white to be buried in the city in an Indian cemetery near Broadway and Wisconsin. The post was on the Chicago-Green Bay trail, located on the site of today's Mitchell Park. Vieau married the granddaughter of an Indian chief and had at least twelve children. Vieau's daughter by another woman, Josette, would later marry Solomon Juneau. These links established an ethnic group, Metis, from the descendants of indigenous women who married French fur trappers



Milwaukee Seal sculpted in stained glass in the City Council chambers – and featured on the cover of this issue of NOW NEWS.

Milwaukee has three "founding fathers": Solomon Juneau, Byron Kilbourn and George H. Walker. Solomon Juneau, the first of the three to come to the area, arrived in 1818. The French Canadian Juneau married Josette Vieau, daughter of Jacques Vieau, in 1820, and Vieau eventually sold the trading post to his son-in-law and daughter, the "founding mother of Milwaukee." The Juneaus moved the post in 1825 to the eastern bank of the Milwaukee River (between the river and Lake Michigan), where they founded the town called Juneau's Side, or Juneautown. This town soon attracted settlers from the Eastern United States and Europe.

Soon after, Byron Kilbourn settled on the west side of the Milwaukee River. In competition with Juneau, Kilbourn established Kilbourntown there, making sure that the streets running toward the river did not match up with those on the east side. This accounts for the large number of angled bridges that still exist in Milwaukee today. Further, Kilbourn distributed maps of the area that showed only Kilbourntown, implying that Juneautown did not exist or that the east side of the river was uninhabited and thus undesirable.

The third prominent builder, George H. Walker, claimed land to the south of the Milwaukee River, where he built a log house in 1834. This area grew and became known as Walker's Point.

The proximity of the towns sparked tensions in 1845 after the completion of a bridge built between Kilbourntown and Juneautown. Kilbourn and his supporters viewed the bridge as a threat to their community and ultimately led to Kilbourn destroying part of the bridge. Over the next few weeks, skirmishes broke out between the inhabitants of the two towns; while no one was killed, several people were seriously injured. After this event, known as the Milwaukee Bridge War, the two towns made greater attempts at cooperation.

By the 1840s, the three towns had grown to such an extent that on January 31, 1846 they combined to incorporate as the City of Milwaukee and elected Solomon Juneau as the city's first mayor. A great number of German immigrants had helped increase the city's population during the 1840s and continued to migrate to the area during the following decades.

Milwaukee became known as the "Deutsches Athen" (German Athens), and into the 20th century, there were more German speakers and German-language newspapers than there were English speakers and English-language newspapers in the city. To this day, the Milwaukee phone book includes more than 40 pages of Schmitts or Schmidts, far more than the pages of Smiths.

In the mid-19th century Milwaukee earned the nickname "Cream City", which refers to the large number of cream colored bricks that came out of the Menomonee River Valley and were used in construction. At its peak, Milwaukee produced 15 million bricks a year, a third going out of the state.

During the first half of the 20th century, Milwaukee was the hub of the socialist movement in the United States. Milwaukeeans elected three Socialist mayors during this time: Emil Seidel (1910–1912), Daniel Hoan (1916–1940), and Frank Zeidler (1948–1960), and remains the only major city in the country to have done so. Often referred to as "Sewer Socialists," these Milwaukee Socialists were characterized by their practical approach to government and labor. These practices emphasized cleaning up neighborhoods and factories with new sanitation systems, city owned water and power

systems, and improved education systems. During this period, socialist mayor Daniel implemented the country's first public housing project, known as Garden Homes. The socialists' influence began to dwindle in the late 1950s amidst the "red scare".



The first version of Milwaukee's seal was developed around the time of the city's incorporation in 1846 and was used on land deeds. The original seal, primarily depicting the city's first lighthouse, does however, appear on at least one deed that predates the city's actual incorporation. The lighthouse design symbolizes marine and shipping heritage during the city's early years.

According to the Milwaukee County Historical Society, “As the city grew and other industries flourished, different elements of Milwaukee garnered inclusion on the seal. A re-design produced the corporate seal that is still in use today. While the lighthouse and Lake Michigan are still visible in the center, other elements that were prominent in the latter half of the 19th century have been incorporated. Four scenes are arranged around the central scene of the lighthouse. They are a railroad train, Milwaukee’s first City Hall, a steamboat on Lake Michigan and a house.”

“While the seal itself is in safekeeping with Milwaukee’s City Clerk, a permanent, more colorful version of it resides in the form of a stained glass window in the City Council chambers. As part of a Works Progress Administration project, the window was created by artists and installed in 1939 by Conrad Schmitt Studios.”

“As Milwaukee grows both with its diversity of citizens and businesses, the seal’s design, like many other landmarks of Milwaukee remind us of what values and industries helped create our city by the lake.”



Obverse of the NOW / SSCC wooden nickel to be given out at their 3-day event March 31 – April 2.



The Milwaukee Seal will be featured on the reverse of the NOW / SSCC wooden nickel.

Sources:

-Milwaukee County Historical Society,
milwaukeehistory.net

-wikipedia.org

An Award You Can Take a Shine To

by Justin Perrault #2104

There is an interesting medal I recently came across which combines my interests of numismatics, architecture, and the history of the SC Johnson Wax Company. This medal is the Carnauba Palm Citation Award, representing the highest honor the company gave out to distinguished employees and other individuals. But first, a little bit of background on the SC Johnson Company.

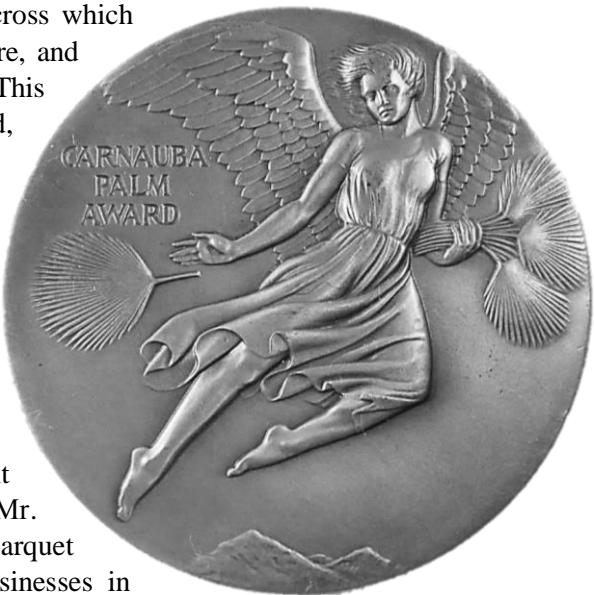
The company as we know it today was officially founded in 1886 by Samuel Curtis (S.C.) Johnson, Sr. in Racine, Wisconsin when he purchased the parquet flooring business of the Racine Hardware Company and renamed it Johnson's Prepared Paste Wax Company. Mr.

Johnson initially sold parquet flooring to homes and businesses in conjunction with the wax needed to keep the

floors looking fresh and clean. With every parquet floor that was installed, he presented the new owner with a complimentary sample of his wax paste. Of course the buyers of these new floors always came back for more once the sample was depleted, and this product was such a big hit and huge success Mr. Johnson soon realized that a business could be developed solely around the wax itself. Mr. Johnson therefore decided to focus upon expanding his business along the lines of floor wax and other similar cleaning products.

Over the succeeding generations of the Johnson family, the company has expanded to operations in over seventy countries throughout the world, employs nearly 13,000 people, and manufactures dozens upon dozens of household cleaning supplies. To this day their corporate offices still call Racine, Wisconsin home, occupying the facilities designed and built by famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright in 1939.

The Carnauba Palm Citation Award medal was designed for the Johnson Wax Company in the 1930's by famed artist Rockwell Kent, and the award was established by the Management Committee of SC Johnson in 1949. The award was the highest honor the company bestowed and was presented to employees or people with close ties to SC Johnson who made an exceptionally meritorious contribution to the advancement of the company. Recipients often included scientists from the company's Research and Development Division for their work on product development. Specifically,



76mm. Bronze



S.C. Johnson

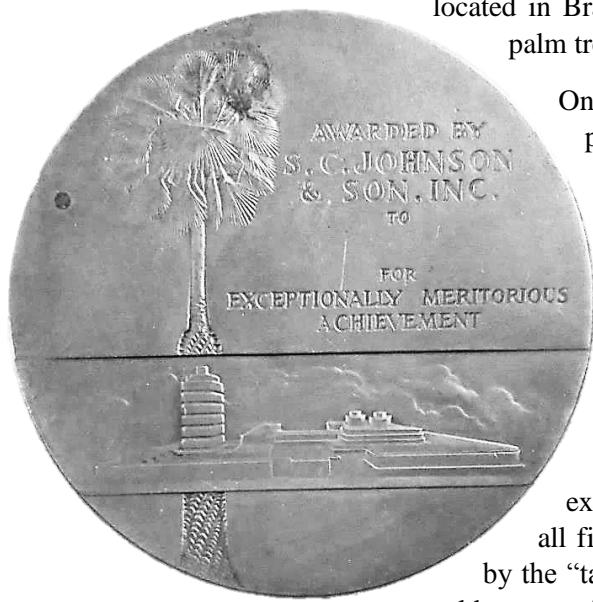
the first two awards were presented to employees, one for the development of a new product and the other for a product promotion idea. Although representatives at the SC Johnson Company do not have records on exactly how many of the medals were produced, they estimate that not many more than thirty were awarded throughout the years. It is also interesting to note that this award was not given out annually, but only when there was a truly extraordinary achievement to be recognized. One very notable recipient of the award was actually Frank Lloyd Wright, since he went to great lengths to design the company offices and research tower that are still occupied by the SC Johnson Company.

Rockwell Kent, the designer of this medal, was a prolific artist and author at the turn of the twentieth century who was born in New York State but continued to travel and live in many places of natural beauty throughout his life. This is fitting considering that the inspiration for much of his work came from the austerity and stark beauty of the wilderness. Today he is most remembered for the very limited edition of *Moby Dick* that he illustrated for the Lakeside Press of Chicago. As a Jazz Age humorist known as "Hogarth, Jr." he also published whimsical and irreverent drawings in the likes of *Vanity Fair*, *Harper's Weekly*, and *Life* magazines. Several of these drawings were brought to life in a series of richly colored reverse paintings on glass completed in 1918 and displayed at Wanamaker's Department Store. Fortunately, two of these glass paintings have been preserved and are presently on display in the collection of the Columbus Museum of Art.



Rockwell Kent

In designing the Carnauba Palm Citation Award, Kent depicted a winged figure on the front, dispensing the palm fronds derived from the carnauba trees that Mr. Johnson owned and managed as part of his wax business. The winged figure is flying above a range of mountains that are most likely located in Brazil, where Mr. Johnson owned a large carnauba palm tree plantation.



On the back of the medal is depicted the carnauba palm tree in all of its majestic glory, aligned directly above the SC Johnson Research Tower and corporate office building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Not only is the company and its success firmly rooted in the strength of the carnauba palm tree, but it is also rooted in the strength of their research tower. Completed in 1950, this tower is one of the tallest structures ever built on the cantilever principle. Standing 153 feet tall and 13 feet in diameter, the tower also extends fifty-four feet into the ground. Symbolically, all fifteen floors of the Research Tower are supported by the "taproot" core, similar to how a carnauba palm tree would support its branches. This is evident in the design of the

medal in how the base of the carnauba palm tree appears to continue through the tower and into the lower levels. As stated on the back of the medal, it was "Awarded by S.C. Johnson and Son, Inc. for Exceptionally Meritorious Achievement". A name would have been engraved on the back amidst the text but this one was apparently never formally issued. Edge lettering reveals the medals were manufactured by Whitehead & Hoag Company of Newark, NJ. The large 76 millimeter medals are made of bronze and weigh 96.2 grams.

If you ever find yourself in the vicinity of Racine you can schedule a free tour of the Research Tower and their corporate offices; they are well worth the visit. The Carnauba Palm Citation Award medal is just a small part of the very interesting history that surrounds the SC Johnson Wax company.

Sources

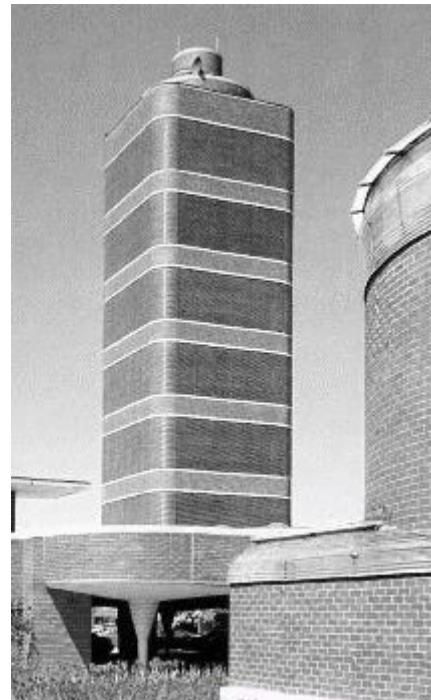
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<http://www.scjohnson.com/en/company/what-we-do.aspx>

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CENTRAL STATES NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

77TH Anniversary Convention

April 27-30, 2016

Renaissance Hotel & Convention Center

Schaumburg, IL



Inflating Away: The Italian 5 Lire Coin

by Mark Benvenuto #2089

Most of us complain – when we get the chance – about how the prices of everyday items keep going up over the course of time, from year to year, or season to season. We seem to believe that inflation is a permanent part of how we live. Indeed, it has gone on for decades, and can be seen in our coinage, as well as the coinage of other countries. In the U.S., our pocket change is no longer made of copper and silver, but rather copper-coated zinc and copper-nickel cladding over copper. Imagine then what it must have been like to live through the inflation that gripped some of the European countries for the last century or so, especially as the outcome of something as devastating as a world war took its toll on the money supply. Let's look at just one coin, the Italian 5-lire coin, and see what time did to it.

The modern nation of Italy is pretty much just that: modern. Prior to the unification that was complete by 1870, the peninsula and islands that make up Italy were several different countries, some large, others much smaller. The lower part of the boot and the island of Sicily were the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, for example. Venice, which we now think of as just a touristy city on the Adriatic, had seen almost a millennium of independent rule snuffed out by none other than Napoleon. Right in the middle of it all were the Papal States, a much larger country than the tiny Vatican City of modern times. And in the Med was the island, and also the kingdom, of Sardinia.

The first 5-lire coins of a unified Italy sported the visage of Victor Emmanuel II – the former King of Sardinia. These are big, silver pieces, about the size of a U.S. silver dollar, and can be found dated as early as 1861. Each contains 0.7234 ounces of the precious metal, and thus even worn pieces will be pegged to the price of silver on the world's markets. It's not difficult to find these big 5-lire coins, as at most large shows some dealers in foreign coins will have a few in stock. Finding examples at or near mint state may be more of a challenge. And assembling a date run through until 1879 – which

includes King Humbert (Umberto on his coinage) – may be quite the challenge. But all things considered, this could be a fun pursuit.

After 1879, the silver 5-lire coin pulls something of a Rip van Winkle, as it was not minted again until 1901. Now it was Victor Emmanuel III on the obverse, but the 1901 becomes a one-year type coin and a ridiculous rarity.

According to the Krause catalog, only 114 were minted. Plus, after this one issue, it again disappears, this time until 1911. That was the 50th anniversary of a united Italy, and the 5-lire coins commemorate it on the reverse. The next issue after that was 1914, still with Victor E on the obverse, but with a different reverse. Both of these are expensive pieces.



Now strangely, Italy was on the winning side of the First World War, but the conflict took a toll not only on its men but on the economy. The next 5-lire coins came out of the mint in Rome in 1926. But now they were small, 5-gram pieces, each with only 0.1342 ounces of silver in them. Inflation had hit, and hit hard.

There are a few collectible years of these smaller, low silver 5-lire coins, as well as several in which only a few were made, possibly for wealthy collectors, or for some state ceremony. From 1926 – 1930 these are common coins, as they are again from 1936 – 1937, although admittedly the last two years are the scarce ones in this series.

Italy certainly was not on the winning side of the Second World War, and this utterly destroyed their economy as well as much of their infrastructure. The 5-lire coin would not emerge from the rubble of this war until 1951, and did so as a tiny, aluminum piece that has the feel of the top to a soda pop can. Any purchasing power that 5-lire had, as it did back in the 1860's, was utterly gone. The coin was now just small change.

A person could probably collect 5-lire aluminum pieces from dealer bargain bins, although not many folks appear to do so. Perhaps for collecting fun we just all gravitate to big coins with more history. Perhaps aluminum doesn't inspire the confidence. Whatever the reason though, very few collectors can claim to have assembled a collection of aluminum 5-lire coins that span all the way to the end of the millennium.



By the way, that's not a typo. A few 5-lire pieces were produced basically each year right up until the time Italy adopted the euro. They went into numismatic sets, and do command a premium today. The market for them always seems to be slim, most likely because few people want to pay \$50 or so for a modern aluminum coin.

The 5-lire coin had met its end long before the entire lira system was absorbed into the euro system of coins and currency. But it did hang on, with millions made in the '70's, the '80's, and even the '90's. For the collector who wants the 5-lire coins in their prime though, be prepared to step back to the late 1800's, when the new nation of Italy was born, and a single 5-lire coin had some serious purchasing power.

(This is the first of a series of articles by author Mark Benvenuto featuring World coinage, stay tuned! –Editor)



ANA NEWS



American Numismatic Association Celebrates 125th Anniversary

In the 19th century, information about specialized subject matters was hard to obtain, particularly about something as curious as numismatics – the study of coins, paper currency, tokens and medals. Meeting fellow collectors was nearly impossible, especially for those who lived too remote to take advantage of numismatic societies in large cities. Such was the dilemma of Dr. George Heath of Monroe, Michigan, a coin collector whose efforts at obtaining additional knowledge of the hobby and specimens for his collection were hampered by his location.

Supported by his conviction that there was a need for an organization that would reach all collectors, Dr. Heath posed the question, “What is the matter with having an American Numismatic Association?” And so in 1891, Dr.

Heath and other numismatists met in Chicago and with 61 charter members founded the American Numismatic Association. In the last 125 years, the ANA has grown to become the largest nonprofit numismatic organization in the world. The Association provides its 24,000 members access to the best educational programs in the hobby – seminars, lectures, correspondence courses and online learning opportunities – plus the opportunity to engage with like-minded collectors at two annual conventions.

In the early years, conventions provided the opportunity for members to come together, but relatively few took part due to the limitations of travel. The strength of ANA membership depended upon the quality of *The Numismatist*, a publication first printed and published by Dr. Heath in 1888. Heath did his best to spark interest and provide a wide array of articles, biographical sketches, news items, and the ever-interesting tidbits.

Today, *The Numismatist* remains the gold standard of hobby publications. In December 2015, the ANA digitized all 127 volumes -- 110,000-plus pages of numismatic history available at the click of a mouse. The online digital editions look exactly like the printed originals, allowing users to experience *The Numismatist* in its historical context.



National recognition was achieved by the ANA in 1912, when it was granted a Federal Charter, signed by President William H. Taft. An amendment to make the charter permanent was introduced in 1962, and was signed by President John F. Kennedy.

As the Association flourished, a call was made for a national home and headquarters, and a building fund was established in 1961. Sixteen cities in the central region of the U.S. bid for the location. Ultimately, Colorado Springs, Colorado was selected, and ground-breaking ceremonies were held in 1966. Thanks to the contributions of nearly 4,000 donors, the ANA headquarters was dedicated and opened on June 10, 1967.

The ANA is widely regarded for its variety of educational courses and seminars that enrich members' knowledge and enjoyment of the hobby. The popular Summer Seminar, held annually on the campus of Colorado College, offers students a varied selection of week-long courses. Members also have the opportunity to complete a series of correspondence courses, from their own home, to receive a "Numismatic Scholar" diploma. These courses enhance understanding of the hobby, and introduce collectors to a vast body of resources.

The ANA maintains the largest circulating numismatic library in the world, consisting of more than 128,000 books, auction catalogs, periodicals, videos and slide sets. The climate-controlled rare book room preserves and displays many of the library's most important references, including a copy of *Illustrium Imagines*, the world's first illustrated numismatic book that was printed in 1517.



The Edward C. Rochette Money Museum includes an extensive and ever-growing collection of historical numismatic treasures. This one-of-a-kind facility showcases items the public cannot see anywhere else, including the McDermott/Bebee specimen 1913 Liberty Head nickel valued at \$2 million, and two of the 15 known 1804 dollars valued together at \$6 million. The museum also features the famous Bebee collection of U.S. paper money, and a display of the spectacular Harry W. Bass Jr. collection of U.S. gold and pattern coins.

In February 2016 the Money Museum will unveil an Olympic exhibit featuring a wide range of numismatic objects produced for the Olympic Games, some dating back to the sixth century B.C. Rare Syracusean dekadrachms and other early Greek coins along with modern award and participation medals, badges and commemorative coins will be on display to highlight the history, ideals and pageantry of the world's greatest athletic event.

Membership in the ANA is less than \$50 annually and includes 12 issues of *The Numismatist*, access to the best educational programs in the hobby and free admission to the World's Fair of Money and National Money Show — the biggest, most educational coin shows in the country.

For additional information about the American Numismatic Association and its activities, please visit www.money.org, email pr@money.org or call (719) 632-2646.

ANA – The Edward C. Rochette Money Museum opens new exhibit



Honoring the history, ideals and pageantry of the world's finest athletic event.

To mark the XXXI Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro this summer, the Edward C. Rochette Money Museum unveiled the exhibit, **The Olympic Games – History and Numismatics**, on Feb. 12. The exhibit showcases the wide range of numismatic objects and memorabilia honoring the Olympic Games from their ancient beginnings to the modern revival. Notable artifacts include rare Syracusan dekadrachms, a 1936 Berlin Summer Olympics bronze medallion, a complete set of award medals from the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympics and 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics, plus participation medals, torches and even a few mascots. The exhibit runs through March 2017.



WHAT'S NEW AT THE U.S. MINT ?

Mark Twain Commemorative Coins

Five Dollar Gold Proof and Uncirculated, and One Dollar Silver Proof and Uncirculated issues.



Who doesn't remember reading *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* or *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*? These American classics written by Mark Twain captured a period of history and made it seem real and exciting for generations of students.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens, whose pen name was Mark Twain, has influenced American culture like few other authors; Twain published 28 books, as well as many short stories, letters and sketches. He is remembered for addressing complex social situations that were facing Americans during his time.

His books have been translated into more than 75 languages, and many are still in print today. This commemorative coin program is in recognition of Mark Twain's literary and educational contributions.

The obverse of the Gold coin features a portrait of Mark Twain with the inscriptions "IN GOD WE TRUST," "LIBERTY" and "2016." The reverse depicts a steamboat in the Mississippi River. The inscriptions are "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA," "\$5" and "E PLURIBUS UNUM."

The obverse of the Silver coin features a portrait of Mark Twain holding a pipe with smoke forming a silhouette of Huck Finn and Jim on a raft in the background with the inscriptions "IN GOD WE TRUST," "LIBERTY" and "2016." The reverse features an assortment of characters leaping to life from Mark Twain's works: The knight and horse from *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, the frog from "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" and Jim and Huck from *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The inscriptions are "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA," "\$1" and "E PLURIBUS UNUM."

Surcharges for each coin sold (\$10 for Silver, \$35 for Gold) are authorized to be paid to the Mark Twain House and Museum in Hartford, Connecticut; the University of California, Berkeley; Elmira College, New York; and the Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum in Hannibal, Missouri.

Currently, the Gold Proof sells for \$388.30 and the Uncirculated Gold sells for \$383.30. The Silver Proof sells for \$45.95, and the Uncirculated Silver sells for \$44.95. The scheduled mintages are 100,000 for the Gold coins and 350,000 for the Silver coins. Order yours today at usmint.gov

Platinum Coins

The American Eagle Platinum Coin is produced with a proof finish. This one ounce coin produced by the U.S. Mint is a beautiful piece of patriotic art.

Platinum Bullion Coins provide investors with a convenient and cost effective way to add platinum to their investment portfolio.

Platinum Bullion Coins are available through dealers only and are not sold directly from the U.S. Mint. They are market priced.





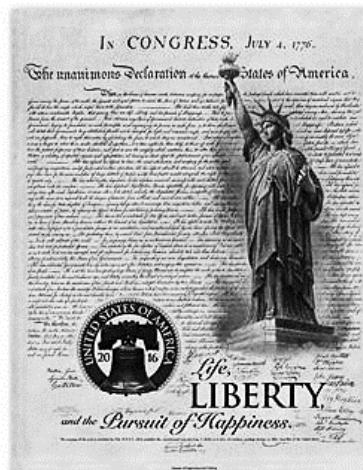
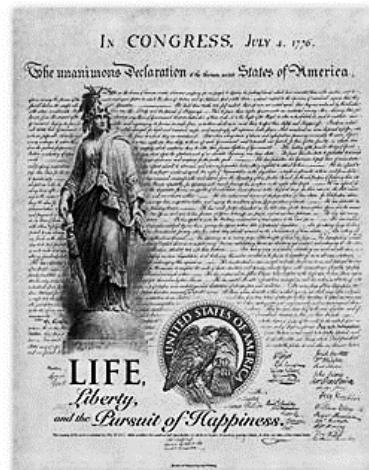
BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING

2016 Intaglio Print Subscription Program *Independence Collection*

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) is pleased to introduce its 2016 Intaglio Print Subscription Program, the *Independence Collection*. This year's program focuses on the Declaration of Independence. The collection features an exquisite compilation of unique, engraved vignettes focusing on the age-old art of intaglio printing.

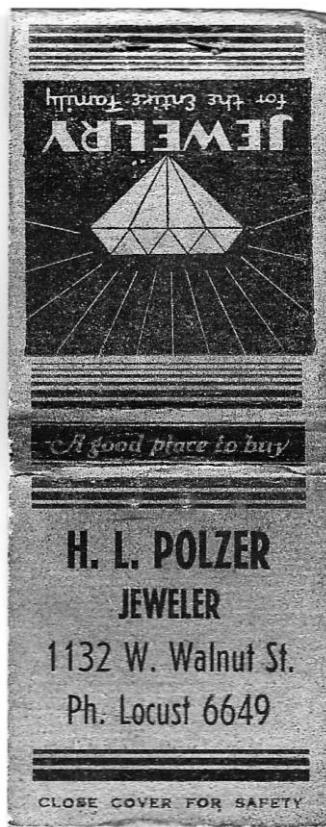
The *Independence Collection* consists of three intaglio prints – *Life*, *Liberty*, and *Pursuit of Happiness*. The first card, *Life*, went on sale January 7, 2016 in conjunction with BEP's participation at the Florida United Numismatists convention in Tampa, Florida. The second card, *Liberty*, went on sale March 3, 2016. The third card, *Pursuit of Happiness*, will go on sale August 9, 2016.

You may participate in BEP's 2016 Intaglio Print Subscription Program *Independence Collection* at a cost of \$51, (while subscriptions are still available) or purchase individual cards at \$22.50 each. Each intaglio print will ship after its first day of sale as noted above. To purchase, please visit the BEP website, moneyfactorystore.gov. You may also order by phone (1-800-456-3408) or by fax (1-888-891-7585).



MILWAUKEE'S EARLIEST COIN DEALER

By Tom Casper #982



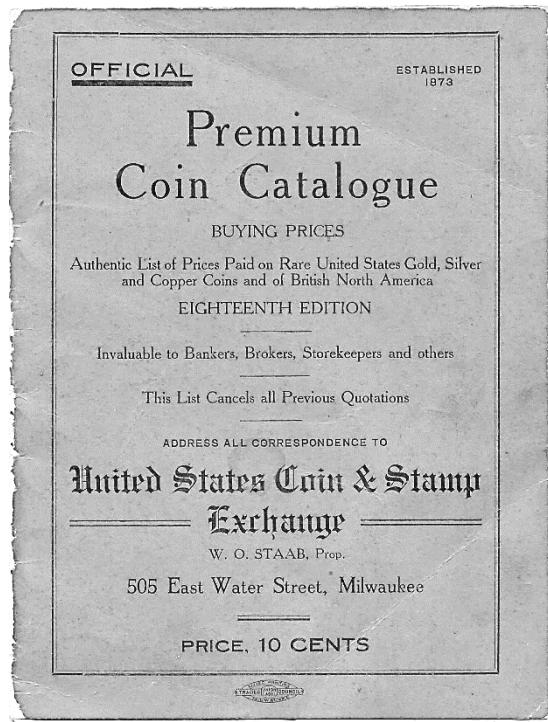
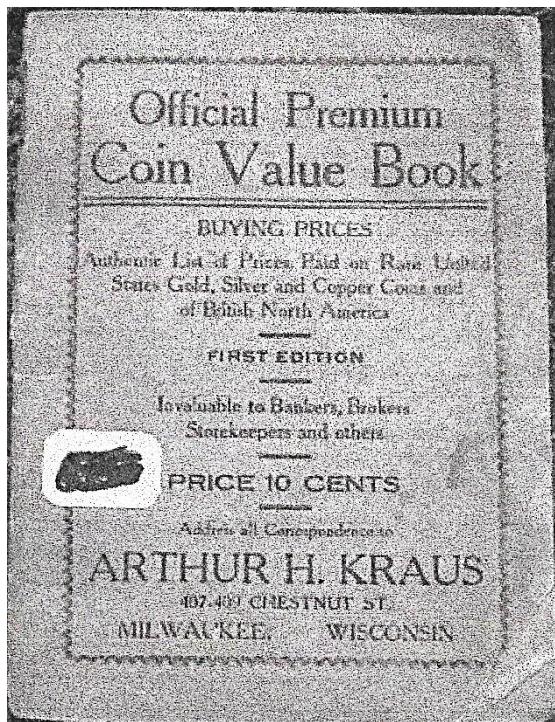
During the past year, I purchased a matchbook. It wasn't because I collect them but because I recognized the merchant's name. The name is H.L. Polzer, Jeweler, 1132 W. Walnut St., (Milwaukee, Wis.) I knew the name, Hubert L. Polzer, as a long-time coin dealer in Milwaukee, back in the 1960's when I returned to coin collecting. I can remember visiting his store at 4716 W. Center St. Polzer told MNS member Russ Koenig, who once worked for him, that he started selling coins in 1919.

I began to wonder if Polzer was Milwaukee's earliest commercial coin dealer. I began checking early Milwaukee City Directories looking for clues. Hubert is first listed in 1917 as a clerk. By 1923 he was listed as a Jeweler at 1122 Walnut. By 1933 he was located at 1132 W. Walnut St., the address on the matchbook. It was 1946 when Polzer first mentioned coins in his jewelry listing saying "We Buy-Sell Old Coins". He remained at this address through 1957. By 1964 he relocated to W. Center St. Polzer operated his coin store until he moved to Florida in 1968. He resided in Largo, FL and died there at the age of 82 in 1982. Polzer was a charter member of the Central States Numismatic Society, joining in 1939. He held a number of offices from 1939 to 1953 including President in 1941.

The earliest listing for coin stores in my directories was the 1938 telephone directory under the heading, "Coins-Old". It listed two stores; Arcade Stamp & Coin Co., 161 W. Wisconsin, and George Kadin Co., 943 N. 3rd St. But there were no coin ads in any directories prior to 1919 when Polzer said he started selling coins.

I checked my library as I remembered having two early Milwaukee coin-buying pamphlets, both undated. The first one was from United States Coin & Stamp Exchange, W.O. Staab, Prop., 505 E. Water St., Milwaukee. The other pamphlet is only a photocopy of the front cover. It is from Arthur H. Kraus, 407-409 Chestnut St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A check of early Milwaukee City directories showed that both men were printers.

The name on the first pamphlet, Arthur H. Kraus first appeared in directories in 1904 using the hyphenated address of 407-409 Chestnut, the address on the pamphlet. His company was the Kraus-Laudon Printing Co. He used that address through 1909. His booklet could have been issued anytime from 1904 to 1909 but he never mentioned coins in his directory listings.



The name on the second pamphlet, William O. Staab and his company, United States Coin & Stamp Exchange, first appeared in directories in 1906 at 505 E. Water St., the address on the pamphlet. He is listed at this address through 1909. His printing business was called Sauer & Staab Co. Since his business name mentions "coin" in 1906, I think he may be the earliest advertised coin dealer in Milwaukee.

Unfortunately research showed that Polzer wasn't the earliest commercial coin dealer in Milwaukee but he was probably the most influential dealer in Milwaukee during the heydays of coin collecting.

A few side notes:

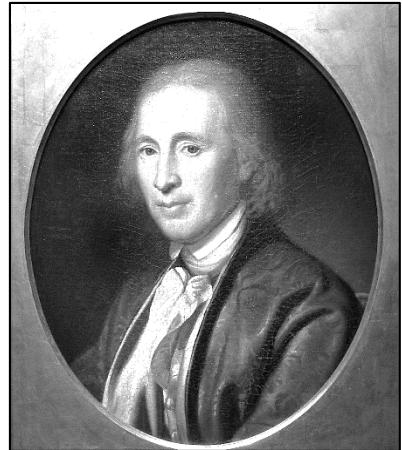
Hubert Polzer joined the Milwaukee Numismatic Society in 1935 as member #12. Arthur Kraus joined the Milwaukee Numismatic Society in 1937 as member #41. William Staab was never a member of the Milwaukee Numismatic Society.

Dr. David Rittenhouse

by David Finkelstein

Introduction

This is Part 1 of a series of articles about Dr. David Rittenhouse, the first Director of the United States Mint. Over the last few decades, multiple incorrect statements and theories about events during his lifetime and after his death have been published in numerous numismatic articles and publications. These falsities have been perpetuated simply because they were put in print, without any contemporary evidence to validate them. They have become accepted as being factual. They are not.



Falsity #1 – David Rittenhouse Was Incarcerated In Debtors’ Prison

Robert Morris was a Philadelphia merchant. He was also a signer of the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the United States Constitution. During the American Revolution, he used his business connections to arrange for the majority of the financing for the American military. He served in the Second Continental Congress and was Superintendent of Finance of the United States from 1781 to 1784. While the Federal government resided in Philadelphia, President George Washington lived in Robert Morris’s house. Morris represented Pennsylvania in the United States Senate from March 4, 1789 to March 4, 1795. In 1789, Washington appointed Morris Secretary of the Treasury. Morris declined, recommending Alexander Hamilton.

By 1798, Robert Morris was bankrupt and in financial ruin. Beginning in February, 1798, he served 3 ½ years in Philadelphia’s debtors’ prison. In a letter he wrote from debtors’ prison on September 29, 1798 regarding the Yellow Fever Epidemic, he stated:

Our prisoners are gone, except the sick, Banks, Rittenhouse, and myself. Poor Dick is very ill, and they begin to say he is to die... They all have the fever, but still I am not alarmed, although in the house with it. I keep up stairs and avoid all intercourse as much as I can. I have written to William to not to come to-morrow.

Within recent years, it became the belief of a few researchers that the *Rittenhouse* referred to in Robert Morris’s September 1798 letter was Dr. David Rittenhouse, the first Director of the United States Mint. Since Rittenhouse’s death was widely publicized in Philadelphia newspapers two years earlier, it was then theorized that Rittenhouse did not, in fact, die in 1796. His June 26th death, June 27th burial, and December 17th Eulogium to hundreds of family members, friends, business acquaintances, heads of state (including President Washington), members of Congress, foreign dignitaries, and Philadelphia residents was suggested to have been a massive cover up to maintain the integrity of his image and to protect his reputation. This wild theory also identified Dr. Benjamin

Rush (a signer of the Declaration of Independence), and William Barton (consultant to the third committee tasked to develop the Great Seal of the United States and the nephew of David Rittenhouse) as the two people who conspired to fake Rittenhouse's death.

David Rittenhouse Was Not Incarcerated In Debtors' Prison

I have found no contemporary evidence that hints, suggests or states that David Rittenhouse was ever sentenced to debtors' prison or was ever incarcerated in debtors' prison. I did find contemporary evidence that a Philadelphia merchant, **Joseph Rittenhouse**, was incarcerated in the Pruan (or Prune) Street debtors' apartment (or prison) during 1796, 1797, and 1798. Per page 613 of *Journal of The House of Representatives of the United States, Being the First Session of the Third Congress: Begun and Held at the City of Philadelphia, December 2, 1793, Volume II, Reprinted by order of the House of Representatives, Gales & Seaton, 1826*:

Monday, December 12, 1796.

A petition of Joseph Rittenhouse, of the city of Philadelphia, merchant, now confined in the debtors' apartment in the said city, was presented to the House and read, praying relief, in the case of a judgment obtained against him in the District Court of Pennsylvania, on behalf of the United States.

Per pages 744 and 745 of the same journal:

Six o'clock, P.M. Friday, March 3, 1797.

Mr. Swanwick, from the committee to whom was referred, on the twelfth of December last, the petition of Joseph Rittenhouse, made a report; which was read, and ordered to lie on the table.

Per page 494 of *Annals of the Congress of the United States. Fifth Congress, Gales & Seaton, 1851*:

Tuesday, January 30, 1798.

Mr. Ross presented the petition of Joseph Rittenhouse, stating that he is a prisoner at the suit of the United States, and, having surrendered his property, prays to be liberated; and the petition was read.

Ordered, That it lie on the table.

Per page 157 of *Journal of The House of Representatives of the United States, Being the First Session of the Fifth Congress: Begun and Held at the City of Philadelphia, May 15, 1797, Volume III, Reprinted by order of the House of Representatives, Gales&Seaton, 1826:Friday, February 2, 1798*.

A petition of Joseph Rittenhouse, late a merchant of the City of Philadelphia, now confined in the debtor's apartment, in the said City, was presented to the House and read, praying relief, in the case of a judgment obtained against him, on behalf of the United States, in the District Court of the United States for the District of Pennsylvania.

Per the 1791 *Philadelphia Directory* and 1793 *Philadelphia Directory*, Nichola Lewis, Esq., was the “keeper of the debtors apartment, Pruan St”. Per the 1794 *Philadelphia Directory*, Nichola Lewis was corrected to Nicholas Lewis as the “brigadier general at the debtors department, Pruan St”. Prune Street was either misspelled multiple times in the 1791, 1793 and 1794 directories [highly unlikely], it was renamed to Prune Street sometime in 1794 or 1795, or it was also referred to as Prune Street. Per the 1795 *Philadelphia Directory*, John Dickson was the “Keeper of the Debtors apartment, Prune Street”. In the 1796 *Philadelphia Directory*, Prune Street reverted back to Pruan Street, and John Dickson was the “keeper of the debtor's apartment, Pruan Street”. There was no mention of a debtors' apartment or debtors' prison in the 1797, 1798 or 1799 directories.

[Note: to confuse things even more, references to Pruan and Prune Streets eventually disappeared, reemerging as part of Locust Street. The debtors' apartment was located at what is now the intersection of Locust and Sixth Streets.]

Who Was Joseph Rittenhouse?

Joseph Rittenhouse was first listed in the 1794 *Philadelphia Directory* as a merchant located at 119 North Water Street. He was not listed in the 1795 and later directories. Since the forward to the 1795 *Philadelphia Directory* was dated September 30, 1795, Joseph Rittenhouse was most likely in the Pruan Street debtors' prison by then.

Joseph Rittenhouse advertised 10 times in Philadelphia newspapers between March 10, 1795 and April 4, 1795. (See Figures 1 through 4.) On June 9, 1795 he placed a notice in the Philadelphia Gazette requesting all persons that had demands against him to furnish him their accounts. (See Figure 5.) He was eventually sentenced to debtors' prison, located on Pruan Street, later Prune Street, and now Locust Street.

A Mill to be Let,

CALCULATED for manufacturing superfine flour, with two water wheels, two pair of burr mill stones, one chest with two Boulting reels for superfine flour, one do, with two reels for middlings, ship stuff, &c.—The mill house is three story high, 53 by 43 feet, with the same a two story stone dwelling house, barn, and 30 acres of up land and meadow, and more if required. The mill is situated on Wifahicken Creek, in Roxborough township, about 7 miles from Philadelphia, one and a half from Germantown, and three quarters from the Ridge or Reading roads, leading both from Germantown and from the Ridge roads to the said mill. Possession will be given on the 5th of April next. For terms apply to

MARTIN RITTENHOUSE,
Limerick township, Montgomery county, or to
JOSEPH RITTENHOUSE,
No. 119, north Water-street.

For Sale,

The remarkable fast sailing sloop
New-York Packet,

WILLIAM BELL, master ;
HAS excellent accommodations for passengers, now lying at Peter's wharf above Race street, burthen about 700 barrels, with all her rigging, sails, &c. in good order, and ready for sea.

For terms apply to

JOSEPH RITTENHOUSE,
North Water street, No: 119.

Figure 1. *Philadelphia Gazette*, March 7, 1795.

Figure 2. *Philadelphia Gazette*, March 18, 1795.

*A Plantation for Sale, near
New-Orleans,*

SITUATED in the settlement of St. Bernard, in the province of Louisiana, one quarter of a league from the church of Bernard, and three leagues from Orleans, containing about one thousand, six hundred and ten acres of most excellent land. There is on the premises a frame house and barn, apple and peach orchards, and a great number of sweet orange trees, &c, For terms, apply to

JOSEPH RITTENHOUSE,
North Water-street, No. 119.
Philadelphia March 11.

Figure 3. *Philadelphia Gazette*, March 19, 1795.

FOR SALE,
A Bill of Exchange on Savannah
In Georgia, at 30 days sight, for 600 dollars.
JOSEPH RITTENHOUSE,
No. 119, north Water-street.

Figure 4. *Philadelphia Gazette*, April 4, 1795.

Based on my research from multiple genealogy websites, and *Genea-Biographical History Of The Rittenhouse Family And All Its Branches In America, With Sketches Of Their Descendants*, Daniel K. Cassel, 1893, I was able to locate three people with the name of Joseph Rittenhouse who lived in the Philadelphia metropolitan area during the latter part of the 18th century. All three were David Rittenhouse's cousins.

David Rittenhouse's grandfather, the Reverend Nicholas Rettinghouse, was born in 1666 in Mulheim, Germany. He emigrated to New York, then moved to Germantown, PA. He had 14 children.

- Matthias Rittenhouse was born in 1702. He was the son of Nicholas above. Matthias had 10 children, and was the father of David Rittenhouse, the first Director of the United States Mint. David was born on April 8, 1732 in Germantown, PA (7 miles north of Philadelphia).
- Henry DeWees Rittenhouse was born in 1700. He was the son of Nicholas, brother of Matthias, and therefore was David's uncle. He had 7 children.
 1. One of Henry DeWees children, William (David's 1st cousin), was born in 1723 in Roxborough Township, PA. William had 11 children. One of William's sons, Joseph (David's 1st cousin once removed), was born on March 3, 1776 in Germantown, PA. This Joseph Rittenhouse would have been 19 years old when the ads in Figures 1 - 5 appeared in newspapers.
 2. Another of Henry DeWees children, Nicholas (David's 1st cousin), was born in 1725 in Roxborough Township, PA. Nicholas had 4 children. One of his sons, Martin (David's 1st cousin once removed) was born on February 12, 1747. Martin

was a miller by trade, and owned a mill along the Wissahickon Creek in Roxborough Township, PA. He is most likely the Martin Rittenhouse identified in the Philadelphia Gazette ad in Figure 1. One of Martin's 8 children, Joseph (David's 1st cousin twice removed) was born on October 9, 1776. This Joseph Rittenhouse would have been 18 years old when the ads in Figures 1 - 5 appeared in newspapers.

3. A third child of Henry DeWees, Henry (David's 1st cousin), was born in 1730 in Norritown, PA (just north of Norristown and 20 miles northwest of Philadelphia). Henry had 6 children. One of Henry's sons, Joseph (David's 1st cousin once removed) was born on May 20, 1766 in Worcester Township, PA (25 miles northwest of Philadelphia). This Joseph Rittenhouse was the first cousin of Martin Rittenhouse, and is the best candidate for possibly being the Philadelphia merchant who was incarcerated in debtors' prison in 1796, 1797 and 1798. Additional research is required.

Conclusion

David Rittenhouse was never sentenced to debtors' prison. He was never incarcerated in debtors' prison. Joseph Rittenhouse, a Philadelphia merchant, was incarcerated in the Pruan (or Prune) Street debtors' prison during 1796, 1797, and 1798. Robert Morris was also incarcerated in the Pruan Street debtors' prison in 1798. The *Rittenhouse* referred to in Robert Morris's September 29, 1798 letter was most likely one of the three Joseph Rittenhouse's previously identified. David Rittenhouse did, in fact, die on June 26, 1796.

David Finkelstein is a member of the Professional Numismatists Guild. He has been researching the technology, implementation standards, workflow, and people employed at the first U.S. Mint for over 30 years. His renowned research and writing has appeared in numismatic publications including The Numismatist, The John Reich Journal, Coin World, and Numismatic News. This article was originally published in the JRCS Newsletter, the online journal of the John Reich Collectors Society, and used with David's permission.



The First United States Mint

BOOKS !

Press Release from author Michael Shutty about his new book: *LOST CENTS, DEAD OWNERS*

LOST CENTS, DEAD OWNERS: Appreciating Coins in Decay, by Michael Shutty, Jr. Published by Wasteland Press. ISBN: 978-1-68111-090-5.

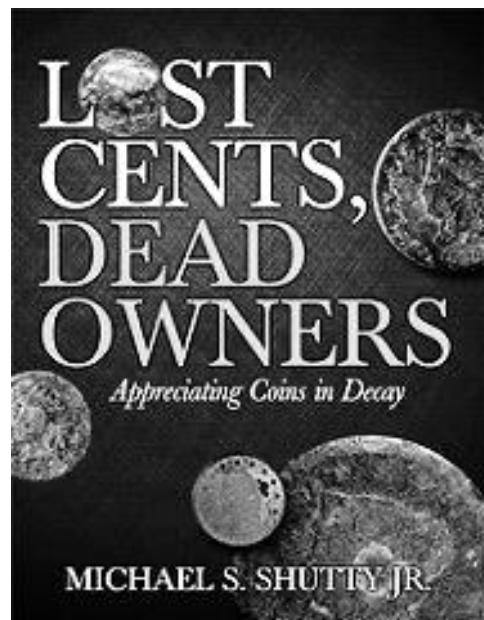
This is a book that I always wanted to read. But no one dared to write it. After a long wait, I decided to do it. I think folks will enjoy this one, as it is a celebration of coin collecting for the armchair historian. This book will appeal to anyone who has marveled at a crusty old coin found in the dirt or behind the hutch.

From the start, the title – *Lost Cents, Dead Owners* – lets you know that this is a no-nonsense book. It presents a familiar viewpoint with a twist: “A (lost) coin is history in your hand.” Such musings have unfortunately become lost in a coin marketplace that is obsessed with high-grade, high-value coins.

This book opens with the argument that corroded coins are fascinating relics that deserve to be collected. Early on I challenge the reader to appreciate the beauty of verdigris and other colorful products that signal when a coin is returning to nature. Like all great art, I suggest that the evocative impact of corrosion finds its energy in the darker emotions associated with loss, decay, and death.

This aesthetic is not new, as classical writers have remarked on the splendor, and romance, of ruins – from Roman temples to early American plantations. Charles Dickens called it an “awful beauty.” Other writers have claimed that many ruins are more beautiful now than when newly built. Indeed, the aesthetics of decay are shaped by the conflict between nature and the object wherein the object is losing. I submit that relic coins are ruins that we can hold in our hand.

This book also provides an in-depth tutorial on how copper and copper-nickel coins corrode. The minerals that accumulate on the surface of decaying cents and nickels are described. In addition, the electrochemical processes wherein electrons are stolen and the metal is eaten away are explained in plain language. No other coin book covers this material as well. Color photographs throughout the text illustrate the corrosive processes at work – I think the reader will find that the coins shown are spectacular.



This book suggests several strategies for collecting relic coins. In particular, I introduce the idea of contextual collecting. This approach uses archeological finds as a guide to selecting relic coins that reflect those found at specific historic sites. Imagine how fun it would be to collect the same coins actually dug from a Civil War battlefield or discovered in a colonial house. This contextual approach is contrasted with the mundane date-and-mint ritual that has shaped collecting since Victorian times.

I conclude the book by providing guidelines for selecting relic coins with original surfaces. You may be surprised to learn that unscrupulous dealers try to create a relic-look with household chemicals. Also, tech-savvy folks doctor their on-line photographs to make their coins look more alluring. I will show you how to avoid these deceptions.

This soft-cover book is a slim volume at 80 pages, but it is filled with ideas that you will not find elsewhere. It is an introspective book for the true collector – a great weekend read. The references cited range from the classics to geology to spectroscopy, and of course, numismatics. The format is large at 8.5 x 11. All the photographs are in vivid color. The book is available for \$24.95 from Books123.org.

A large cent caked with verdigris is not typically found on a collector's want list, *but it should be*. It is a relic, and like a rusty hand-wrought nail dug from a flowerbed, it has a story. Who lost it? When? And, how did this lowly cent survive the onslaught of Mother Nature? It is a mystery worth holding in your hand.



- *Lost Cents, Dead Owners* celebrates beauty in decay. Corroded coins in full bloom are like impressionist paintings with colors mixed in unpredictable ways. The evocative beauty of a corroded cent finds its energy within the darker emotions of loss, decay, and death.
- *Lost Cents, Dead Owners* likens corroded coins to ruins. Crumbling walls and fallen arches are mesmerizing. A ruinous coin has the same impact. No wonder we can't stop looking, our fingertips picking at the green verdigris with an urgent curiosity.
- *Lost Cents, Dead Owners* explores the corrosion processes at work. Like a thousand piranhas, oxidation bites off electrons, as the coin goes back to nature. The minerals left behind signal loudly that the end is near.
- *Lost Cents, Dead Owners* provides strategies for adding a few corroded cents and nickels to your coin collection. Whereas most collectors shun these coins, there is an active market for attractive and evocative pieces.



\$24.95 USD

Author **Michael S. Shatty, Jr.**, is a psychologist and avid collector who has written numerous articles about numismatics. His books include *One Coin is Never Enough* and *Communion Tokens*. Both books have won Extraordinary Merit Awards from the Numismatic Literary Guild.

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LIVE WATER *by Jeff Reichenberger #1933*

(This ‘numisfiction’ imagines a future without coins, but predicts they can remain useful. –Editor)

Max climbed the staircase slowly, clutching the discs. He and his father reached the third floor of the infirmary. Max’s Great Great Grandfather Benjamin Earnst occupied chamber 327.

“Grandpa B” lay silently, eyes forever closed now, hands quiet at his sides. The screen above his head flickered. Max teared up. He would turn 9 in just 4 days and Grandpa B would turn 144 two days later. They always celebrated their birthdays together since Max was born. But Grandpa B had been immobile for 6 months. His mind was sharp, but nothing else functioned and he decided it was time to expire. Sonic echolocation bandwidth provided communication.

Max’s father Joseph spoke, “Hello Gramps”. The screen above Grandpa B came to life and his thoughts appeared in words:

HELLO JOSEPH - DID YOU BRING MAX?

“I’m here Grandpa B” said Max, wiping a tear.

HI MAX! HAPPY BIRTHDAY A FEW DAYS EARLY.

I’M SORRY WE’LL MISS OUR CELEBRATION THIS TIME.

“That’s OK. We have today, and I’ll always remember.”

They talked for an hour or so when the E-Doctor interrupted; “Your expiration is in 15 minutes Mr. Earnst”.

“Well Max, I think it’s a good time to ask Grampa about the discs”, said Joseph.

WHAT DISCS?

“I found some round metal discs at your house. They look old and have something engraved on them but they’re mostly worn smooth and...”

COINS! THOSE ARE COINS!

The screen blinked brightly, indicating excitement in Grampa B’s response.

Coins? Max and his dad puzzled.

YES, COINS, THEY WERE MONEY!

“Money”? Asked Max.

YES. YES. WHEN I WAS A BOY WE USED MONEY TO BUY THINGS.

I KNOW YOU BOYS JUST SWIPE YOUR THUMB IMPLANTS – BUT WE EXCHANGED MONEY, COINS AND PAPER NOTES, FOR FOOD AND THINGS. - I'M GLAD YOU FOUND THEM MAX...IN FACT...

“One minute to expiration Mr. Earnst”, the E-Doctor chimed in.

...THERE'S MORE...IN THE SOLAR SHED...

“We love you Gramps”.

I LOVE YOU...BE WELL...MAX...IN THE SHED...VEND...THE MACHINE...

MY WATER....

“Expiration complete”.

Grandpa B's house was on Lake Staley. The solar shed was just feet from the ‘dead’ water, as Gramps liked to call it. Lake Staley was too polluted to sustain any life, never-the-less Grandpa B pumped the dead water into his shed every day. For sixty years he was a civil water purification engineer, which served him well when clean water became scarce and the mandatory rationing began. The solar shed powered everything on his property, the house, the shed itself, and various vehicles of transportation. Grandpa B tinkered in the shed every day. He was an energetic man even into his 140's, but it wasn't his longevity that impressed people, after all, an average American man is now expected to live 118 to 124 years; it was the vigor in which he lived that made everyone take notice.

Max unlocked the shed. Generators were humming. Pipes and wires tangled across the walls and ceiling. Behind the work bench there were five steps leading to a lower room. Dim lights glowed over pumps, filters, and stainless steel pipes that emerged from the floor. A huge brass tank with a glass panel revealed dead water sloshing within it. An eight inch pipe elbowed out to another tank labeled ‘House Water’. Max followed a smaller pipeline that led to a low opening in a concrete wall. Max crawled in. On the floor stood a very old steel box and a pail full of coins! There was a windowed door on top of the box. A shard of tape with the hand written words ‘Live Water’ was peeling away from the side of the door. Max peered inside and saw glass bottles standing in rows. He pulled and pried, but the door wouldn't open. He sat on the floor in frustration, flipping a coin in his hand. “Of course! The coins! Grandpa B said he bought things! Bottles of water!” He found a slot. The coin jingled in – a latch clicked – he lifted the door – felt a rush of cool air. The opening gave him access to one bottle – he reached in and pulled it out – the heavy, hour-glass shaped bottle felt cold in his hand - he glared at the pure, clear, cold water inside it. There was no brown haze, no floating particles; just clean beautiful water! He'd never seen water like this! He twisted open the wax seal and poured the cold liquid down his parched throat. Max looked to the heavens and gasped, “Thank you Grandpa B!”

Each day Max slips a coin in the slot to unlock a bottle of Live Water. People say he's a rambunctious teenager. Maximillian Benjamin Earnst just celebrated his 49th birthday.

A SHOUT-OUT to LOCAL DEALERS, CLUBS, and SHOW ORGANIZERS

This is a commentary about our local coin dealers. This includes all of the local dealers that service Wisconsin, and of course, those that are members of NOW.

If you've ever had the opportunity to help set up a coin show, you will know that it is no small task. Preparations begin up to a year in advance, deciding a suitable date, securing an adequate hall, distributing applications, and advertising. Then as the date approaches, mapping out a bourse, setting up tables and chairs, lighting and electrical needs, accommodating visiting dealers with any request. These are just some of the things local show organizers handle when putting on a show.

In almost every case, these local show organizers consist of clubs and club members, or dealers, who put on their own shows. This is healthy and invaluable to keep the hobby fresh and fun. Even as the internet takes its inevitable hold on numismatics, it can never, in my opinion, match the importance, experience, education value, or fun of personally visiting a locally run coin show. People sometimes drive hours to walk a bourse with forty tables. They do it because they love it. They love the interaction between collectors, the exploration of dealers' inventory, meeting friends and dealers they haven't seen since last year, the bickering to make a deal, and they love to look at coins. The coins you can examine first hand, without looking at a computer screen, coins you can hold and put a glass up to, to twirl in the light, to catch that luster and weigh the pros and cons of a possible purchase. These actions, performed by countless people at local shows, collectively embody the very heart of numismatics. It keeps the hobby alive and working. It keeps our fun alive.

The backbone of these shows are the local dealers. Again, if you have ever witnessed or helped early morning dealer set up prior to the opening of a show, you will understand what takes place. If you have not had the pleasure, allow me to describe the scene:

It begins in the wee hours of the morning. The dealer begins packing inventory into their vehicle. This inventory, consisting mostly of coins, weighs a lot! The dealer spends at least a half hour loading up. Then depending on how far a drive (sometimes in excess of 4 hours) they hit the road. Most coin shows begin at 9am, and dealer set up begins anywhere from 6 to 8am, so the dealer is on the road earlier than 5am in many cases.

They arrive at the show, park behind other dealers somewhere near the loading entrance, and begin unpacking the vehicle. Unfolding a rickety hand cart (or borrowing one from the facility or a fellow dealer) they overload it with tonnage. It is a slow parade of mostly middle-aged men (some would consider the term middle-aged a gift) hunched and grunting, pushing and pulling, like Egyptian slaves dragging stones up to build the pyramids. Dealers who carry more inventory have to make several trips like this. Finally arriving at the bourse table, now comes the tedium of unpacking the inventory – coin by coin by coin... just getting ready in the nick of time as the public arrives. The show lasts until 4pm, when the packing, and loading resumes. Then the travel, and unloading again.

It is a LONG day for these dealers, but they do it without complaint (mostly), and they do it because they make a living at it, and they do it because they love the hobby. Without them, dare I say, the rest of us who love the hobby would be confined behind a computer screen, with no human-hobby interaction, and that gets old real fast. So let's support these folks! Let's get out to as many local shows as we can. Let's buy and sell with our local dealers. Let's negotiate some deals. Let's shoot the breeze about interesting coins and currency. AND, let's thank them for what they do. *-Editor*

